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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAKU 000694

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [KIL](#) [AJ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN POLITICS: TEHRAN UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR DICSUSSES
POLITICAL ROLE OF AYATOLLAH MESBAH-YAZDI, CLAIMS IRAN
UNDERGOING "HISTORIC TRANSFORMATION"

BAKU 00000694 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Political/Economic Counselor Rob Garverick, Reason 1.4 (B and D)

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sobbing in the streets." He explained that before the election, many Iranians had argued that there was at least some democracy in the system, and that if left alone the regime would by itself evolve into a more democratic and liberal state. Even system opponents and self-declared skeptics felt that evolutionary change within the system was possible. According to Kaymars, the blatantly stolen election and the cynical, repressive aftermath were "blows to the face" that largely demolished this view.

¶6. (C) Kaymars called Ayatollah Khomeini's June 19 sermon "the second transformational point." He asserted that after Khomeini's public anointment of Ahmedinejad, and references to his "divinely inspired" election victory, "Tehran exploded." He compared public reaction in the days after the election to the 1999 Tehran student demonstrations (in which he also participated). He explained that in 1999, "we hoped (in vain) for South Tehranis to join us," but in June and July 2009 "South Tehranis were everywhere."

¶7. (C) In contrast to 1999, he continued, for many days "everybody" protested and/or shouted slogans from the rooftops: &North Tehranis, South Tehranis, students, bazaaris, were chanting death to Khomeini, death to the dictator, we are unified,8 and other protest slogans. "A lot of people were in the streets (in the days after the sermon), and a lot of shooting occurred," he said. He explained that this event was also critical as it shattered the image of Khomeini as an honest, independent arbiter above politics, and revealed him to be "just another political liar and intriguer."

¶8. (C) According to Kaymars, "Phase Three" began with Rafsanjani's re-galvanizing sermon on July 17, and is currently ongoing. "Don't be misled by the current calm surface," he warned, "a lot of political activity is happening." Despite this strong assertion, he described that

the opposition as a coalition of many different groups, lacking organization and facing problems of ultimate direction and leadership. He characterized Mousavi as stubborn, but not charismatic; Karroubi as courageous, but with few institutional allies; and Khatami as cautious and weak. He depicted Rafsanjani's role as short-term and tactical, arguing that he lacks sufficient popular legitimacy for long term leadership. He nonetheless acknowledged Rafsanjani's "cleverness" and strength of personality, and said he remains important in the near term for intra-regime political maneuvering, and for "funneling money" to support the opposition.

Khameini "Not Close to Ahmadinejad"

¶9. (C) Kaymars observed that Supreme Leader Khameini is not personally close to Ahmadinejad, or even strongly in favor of him, but is caught between the "rock" of Rafsanjani/Mousavi and the "hard place" of Mesbah-Yazdi, Ahmadinejad, and their Revolutionary Guard allies. He claimed that Khameini has limited political maneuverability, and is primarily focused on protecting his and his son Mojtaba's future. He asserted that opposition efforts are underway to split Khameini from the Mebah-Yazdi group, and scapegoat the latter for legal and human rights abuses.

Opposition Use of Foreign Media and the Internet

¶10. (C) Kaymars asserted that most Iranians are repulsed and embarrassed by the show trials, and despite nagging historical "default" suspicion of Britain, "no one believes that foreign countries were behind the protests." He said that Iranians have no confidence in domestic media, and claimed that Mousavi and his allies are effectively using foreign media and the internet to propagandize and get their word out. He said that, "even in villages, at least one person in every family is internet-literate," and claimed that Iranians have become adept at successfully playing "hide and seek" with the authorities," and are becoming more so." He added that BBC and VOA are widely watched, and are also playing "a very important role" in delivering and spreading opposition-based and other information.

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Narcotics and Drug Addiction

¶11. (SBU) Kaymars related that at three AM in Tehran University dorms, "you can't buy sweets, but can buy all kinds of narcotics," including heroin. One dose of heroin-based Iranian Crack8 costs one dollar. In addition to the widespread availability of cheap opiate derivatives, he noted that the addictive, high8 producing pain-killer Tramadol (AKA Zydol8) is very popular and can be purchased without a prescription at any pharmacy, at the price of ten pills for 50 cents.

Obama/U.S. "Very Popular" in Iran

¶12. (SBU) According to Kaymars, Iranians like President Obama very much, and appreciate his outreach efforts. "He's the only politician I've ever liked," he said. In general, the U.S. was and is very popular among Iranians, he noted.

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